

Making great places

When designing an infill development it is important to consider the arrangement and configuration of your block, including the orientation of internal and external spaces. A well designed development not only looks good but is well laid out, efficient and comfortable and adds value to a property. Using an experienced designer or architect in your development process will ensure a good final product that has street appeal.

We have evaluated a number of local housing developments to provide you with some suggestions when planning your infill development.



The right height

Two and three storey buildings are the most common form of infill housing. Single storey buildings are challenging to design in order to meet design guidelines and should be avoided because they can feel dark and claustrophobic. Varying the height of buildings makes developments look interesting while limiting overshadowing and capitalising on views. Step building heights one storey at a time at transitions such as site boundaries.



Put a roof over your head

Pitched, hipped or skillion roofs with deep eaves are the best choice for infill housing developments as they help create shadow and texture to the exterior of the building while also providing shade to the windows in summer. Some modern designs combine bold geometric facades with 'flat' roofs. If well designed this type of architecture can work well, but if unsuccessful it can make the building look 'boxy' and unattractive and often don't have eaves or overhangs.



Articulate the architecture

Interesting building facades are more pleasing to the eye than flat, featureless walls. Using porches, balconies and other recesses provides depth to the building. Windows can be framed with window hoods and overhangs for shade and privacy. A mix of two or three quality materials and well-chosen colours and feature details enhances street appeal and avoids plain-looking buildings.



Reduce the impact of garages

Reducing the impact of garages enhances the street appeal and ensures that they don't dominate the development or the street. To do this, consider locating garages to the side or rear where this is possible or use single storey garages between two or three storey houses to provide space and reduce the bulk of the development. Splitting double garage doors into two single doors also helps reduce the impact.



Design for comfort and sustainability

It is important that infill housing is located and positioned for optimal access to sunlight and ventilation by designing housing so that living rooms and outdoor living areas face north. Locating living areas and bedrooms on the western side of a house should be avoided as afternoon sun will make the rooms hot.

The use of large, openable windows for all rooms maximises access to light and breezes and eaves and window hoods/overhangs prevent excess sun onto windows in summer, while allowing solar access in winter. Solar panels, high standard insulation, low solar absorption roofing materials, and rainwater tanks and other sustainable design features are increasingly valued by the community. The lower running costs they bring can make a difference to potential buyers.



A green development is an attractive development

Greening and landscaping around each house and in common areas is an easy and relatively low cost way to make a development stand out above the rest. Greenery can effectively hide less attractive parts of buildings and helps provide privacy and visual amenity for residents and neighbours. Consider green spaces in the design and ensure that space is available for new trees, shrubs, ground covers, as well as small lawns for residents to use.

Some development sites are near parks and open spaces. Maximising views from houses and internal spaces over open space where possible to maximise residents views. Don't skimp on outdoor space. Private outdoor space – whether a courtyard, garden or balcony or all three – is a major attractor for all housing and is a central part of the Australian way of life.



Street appeal sells

Almost all houses advertised for sale show a picture of the street frontage first as street appeal is important to buyers. A quality streetscape is vitally important for safety, creating useable front garden space and encouraging neighbour interaction.

Where possible, build closer to street than detached housing so you don't waste valuable land. The use of low fences or plantings to the street boundary allows the best use of the front outdoor space. Buildings should always face the street and blank walls to the street must be avoided. Developments on longer blocks where some houses face an internal driveway should have at least one house facing the street to provide an attractive street frontage and an effective transition between the development and neighbouring sites and the street.



Work with the slope

On sloping infill sites it is best to step with the slope, minimising the height of retaining walls. Retaining can be located between or within buildings. Multiple low retaining walls avoid or reduce the need for major structures or safety fencing, and make a more comfortable transition between buildings.